

The sum of the Hindoo doctrine, then, is this :—spirit dwelling in bodies, and partaking of the passions incident to residence in matter, is purified by austerities and numerous transmigrations, and at length re-obtains absorption into the divine nature. Religious practice leads to better destiny, and divine destiny draws the person to abstraction and religious austerities.

Such is the Hindoo religion ; let us examine how far it is practised at present. The ceremonies most popular are—the daily ablutions, repeating the names of the gods, the daily worship of some idol, and visiting holy places. The works of merit in greatest estimation are, entertaining bramhūns, building temples, cutting pools, erecting landing-places to the Ganges, and expensive offerings to deceased ancestors.

The strict bramhūns are distinguished by a scrupulous regard to bathing, the daily worship of their guardian deity, and a proud contempt of the lower orders. The voishnūvūs are more sociable, and converse much among each other on their favourite Krishnū, and the accidents connected with religious pilgrimages.

‘At present,’ says the bramhūn whose confession of faith has been given in the preceding pages, ‘*nine parts in ten of the whole Hindoo population have abandoned all conscientious regard to the forms of their religion.* They rise in the morning without repeating the name of god, and perform no religious ceremony whatever till the time of bathing at noon, when, for fear of being reproached by their neighbours, they go and bathe : a few labour through the usual ceremonies, which occupy about fifteen minutes ; the rest either merely bathe, or hypocritically make a few of the signs used in worship, and then return home, and eat. This constitutes the whole of their daily practice. Among these nine parts, moreover, there are many who spend the time of bathing in conversation with others, or in gazing at the women ; and some are to be found who ridicule those who employ a greater portion of time in religious ceremonies : “What ! you have taken an ass’s load of religion.” “Faith ! you are become

very religious—a very holy man. Rise, and go to your proper work." Three-fourths of the single tenth part attend to the daily duties of their religion in the following manner:—when they rise, they repeat the name of their guardian deity, make a reverential motion with the head and hands in remembrance of their absent spiritual guide, then wash themselves in the house, and pursue their business till noon. Should the wife or child have neglected to prepare the flowers, &c. for worship, the master of the family scolds his wife in some such words as these:—"Why do I labour to maintain you? It is not because you can answer for me, or preserve me from punishment at death; but that you may assist me in these things, that I may repeat the name of God, and prepare for a future state." If the son is to be reproved for such a neglect, the father asks him, if he is not ashamed to spend so much time in play, careless how much fatigue he undergoes to please himself, while he is unwilling to do the smallest trifle to please the gods. He declares himself ashamed of such a family, and desires to see their faces no more. He then gathers the flowers himself, and going to the river side, takes some clay, examines whether it be free from every impurity, lays it down, taking a morsel with him into the water, immerses himself once, and then rubs himself with the clay, repeating this prayer, "O earth! thou bearest the weight of the sins of all: take my sins upon thee, and grant me deliverance." He then invites to him the river goddesses Yūmoona, Godavūrēē, Śūrūswītēē, Nūrmūda, Sindhoo, and Kavērēē, that he may, in Gūnga, have the merit of bathing in them all at once, and again immerses himself, after repeating, "On such a day of the month, on such a day of the moon, &c. I (such a one) bathe in the southwards-flowing Gūnga." He then offers up a prayer for himself in some such words as these;—"Ubbūyū-chūrūnū, praying for final happiness for ten millions of his family, bathes in Gūnga:" and then immerses again. Next, he repeats the day of the month, of the moon, &c. and immerses himself, while he utters, "Let my guardian deity be propitious;" and then ascends the bank, wiping his hair, and repeating the praises of Gūnga, as, "O Gūnga, thou art the door of heaven, thou art the watery image of religion, thou art the

garland round the head of Shivü : the very craw-fish in thee are happy, while a king at a distance from thee is miserable." He then sits down, and repeats certain prayers to the sun for the removal of his sins, among which is the celebrated gayütrêë, "*Let us meditate on the adorable light of the divine Ruler, (Savitrêë :) may it guide our intellects.*" He next pours out drink-offerings to Yümü, to Brümha, Vishnoo, Roodrü, the eight progenitors of mankind, to all the gods, and all living things in the three worlds, to certain sages, and at length to his forefathers, praying that they may hereby be satisfied. Now he forms, with the clay he had prepared, an image of the lingü, and worships it; which act includes praise to one of the gods, prayers for preservation, meditation on the form of the idol, hymns on the virtues of some deity, and repetitions of the names of the gods. He then returns home, and repeats, if he has leisure, certain portions of one of the shastrüs. Before he begins to eat, he offers up his food to his guardian deity, saying, "I offer this food to such a god;" and after sitting, with his eyes closed, as long as would be requisite to milk a cow, he takes the food and eats it. In the evening, just before sun-set, if he have a temple belonging to him, he presents some fruits, &c. to the image, repeats parts of the ceremonies of the forenoon, and the name of some deity at considerable length. When he retires to rest, he repeats the word Püdmü-nabhü, a name of Vishnoo. Perhaps one person in ten thousand carries these ceremonies a little farther than this.

As a person passes along the streets and roads he is continually reminded of one or other of these ceremonies :—here sits a man in his shop, repeating the name of his guardian deity, or teaching it to his parrot<sup>b</sup>—there go half a dozen voiragêës, or other per-

<sup>b</sup> This ceremony is supposed to bring gréat blessings both on the teacher and the scholar : the parrot obtains heaven, and so does its master. Numbers of Hindoos, particularly in a morning and evening, may be seen in the streets walking about with parrots in their hands, and repeating aloud to them, 'Radha-Krishnú, Radha-Krishnú, Krishnú, Krishnú, Radha, Radha,' or 'Shivü-Doorga,' or 'Kalêë-tírañ.' Some are thus employed six months, others twelve or eighteen, before the parrot has

sons, making their journey to some holy place—here passes a person, carrying a basket on his head, containing rice, sweet-meats, fruits, flowers, &c. an offering to his guardian deity—here comes a man with a chaplet of red flowers round his head, and the head of a goat in his hand, having left the blood and carcase before the image of Kalēē—there sits a group of Hindoos, listening to three or four persons rehearsing and chanting poetical versions of the pooranūs—here sits a man in the front of his house reading one of the pooranūs<sup>c</sup>, moving his body like the trunk of a tree in a high wind—and (early in the morning) here comes a group of jaded wretches, who have spent the night in boisterously singing filthy songs, and dancing in an indecent manner, before the image of Doorga—add to this, the villagers, men and women, coming dripping from the banks of the Ganges—and the reader has a tolerable view of the Hindoo idolatry, as it stalks, every day, along the streets and roads, and as it may be recognized by any careless observer.

The reader will perceive, that in all these religious ceremonies not a particle is found to interest or amend the heart; no family bible, 'profitable' for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness, that men may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works; no domestic worship<sup>d</sup>; no pious assembly where

learnt his lesson. The merit consists in having repeated the name of a god so great a number of times.

<sup>c</sup> Reading a book, or having it read at a person's house, even though the person himself should not understand it, is a most meritorious action. The love of learning for its own sake is unknown in Bengal: a Hindoo, if he applies to learning, always does it to obtain roopees—or heaven. When he opens one of the shastrūs, or even an account-book, he makes a bow to the book. A shopkeeper, when he is about to balance his books, uncertain how the balance will fall, makes a vow to some god, that if by his favour he should not find himself in debt, he will present to him some offerings.

<sup>d</sup> The women and children take no share in the worship performed by the master of the family. It is not supposed to belong to them. See vol. ii. p. 36.



the village preacher 'attempts each art, reproves each dull delay, allures to brighter worlds, and leads the way.' No standard of morals to repress the vicious; no moral education in which the principles of virtue and religion may be implanted in the youthful mind. Here every thing that assumes the appearance of religion, ends (if you could forget its impurity) in an unmeaning ceremony, and leaves the heart cold as death to every moral principle. Hence the great bulk of the people have abandoned every form and vestige of religious ceremony. The bramhūn who communicated this information, attributed this general disregard of their religion to the kŭlee-yoogŭ; and consoled himself with the idea, that this deplorable state of things was an exact fulfilment of certain prophecies in the pooranŭs.

Some persons may plead, The doctrine of a state of future rewards and punishments has always been supposed to have a strong influence on public morals: the Hindoos not only have this doctrine in their writings, but are taught to consider every disease and misfortune of life as an undoubted symptom of moral disease, and the terrific appearances of its close-pursuing punishment—can this fail to produce a dread of vice, and a desire to merit the favour of the Deity? I will still further assist the objector, and inform him, that the Hindoo writings declare, that till every immoral taint is removed, every sin atoned for, and the mind has obtained perfect abstraction from material objects, it is impossible to be re-united to the Great Spirit; and that, to obtain this perfection, the sinner must linger in many hells, and transmigrate through almost every form of matter. Great as these terrors are, there is nothing more palpable than that, with most of the Hindoos, they do not weigh the weight of a feather, compared with the loss of a roopee. The reason is obvious: every Hindoo considers all his actions as the effect of his destiny; he laments perhaps his miserable fate, but he resigns himself to it without a struggle, like the malefactor in a condemned cell. To this may be added, what must have forced itself on the observation of every thoughtful observer, that, in the absence of the religious principle, no outward terrors,

especially those which are invisible and future, not even bodily sufferings, are sufficient to make men virtuous.—Painful experience proves, that even in a Christian country, if the religious principle does not exist, the excellency and the rewards of virtue, and the dishonour and misery attending vice, may be held up to men for ever, without making a single convert.

But let us now advert to the pernicious errors inculcated in the Hindoo writings, and to the vices and miseries engendered by the popular superstition :—

The Bhūgūvūt-Gēeta contains the following most extraordinary description of God :—‘ *Sūnjāyū*. The mighty compound and divine being Hūree, having, O raja, thus spoken, made evident unto Urjoonū his supreme and heavenly form ; of many a mouth and eye ; many a heavenly ornament ; many an up-raised weapon ; adorned with celestial robes and chaplets ; anointed with heavenly essence ; covered with every marvellous thing ; the eternal God, whose countenance is turned on every side ! The glory and amazing splendour of this mighty being may be likened to the sun rising at once into the heavens, with a thousand times more than usual brightness. The son of Pandoo then beheld within the body of the god of gods, standing together, the whole universe divided into its vast variety. He was overwhelmed with wonder, and every hair was raised an end. He bowed down his head before the god, and thus addressed him with joined hands :—*Urjoonū*. I behold, O god ! within thy breast, the dévūs assembled, and every specific tribe of beings. I see Brūmha, that deity sitting on his lotus-throne ; all the rishees and heavenly oorūgūs : I see thyself, on all sides, of infinite shape, formed with abundant arms, and bellies, and mouths, and eyes ; but I can neither discover thy beginning, thy middle, nor again thy end. O universal lord, form of the universe ! I see thee with a crown, and armed with club and chūkrū, a mass of glory, darting refulgent beams around. I see thee, difficult to be seen, shining on all sides with light immeasurable, like the ardent fire, or glorious sun. I see thee of

valour infinite; the sun and moon thy eyes; thy mouth a flaming fire; and the whole world shining with reflected glory! The space between the heavens and the earth is possessed by thee alone, and every point around; the three regions of the universe, O mighty spirit! behold the wonders of thy awful countenance with troubled minds. Of the celestial bands, some I see fly to thee for refuge; whilst some, afraid, with joined hands sing forth thy praise. The mūhūrshes, holy bands, hail thee, and glorify thy name with adoring praises. The roodrūs, the adityūs, the vīsoos, and all those beings the world esteemeth good; ūshwinū, and koomarū, the mūroots and the ooshmūpas, the gūndhūrvūs and yūkshūs, with the holy tribes of ūsoorūs; all stand gazing on thee, and all alike amazed! The worlds, alike with me, are terrified to behold thy wondrous form gigantic; with many mouths and eyes; with many arms, and legs, and breasts; with many bellies, and with rows of dreadful teeth! Thus as I see thee, touching the heavens, and shining with such glory; of such various hues; with widely-opened mouths, and bright expanded eyes; I am disturbed within me; my resolution faileth me, O Vishnoo! and I find no rest! Having beholden thy dreadful teeth, and gazed on thy countenance, emblem of time's last fire, I know not which way I turn! I find no peace! Have mercy then, O god of gods! thou mansion of the universe! The sons of Dhritūrashtrū, now, with all those rulers of the land, Bhēeshmū, Dronū, the son of Sōōtū, and even the fronts of our army, seem to be precipitating themselves hastily into thy mouths, discovering such frightful rows of teeth! whilst some appear to stick between thy teeth with their bodies sorely mangled\*.—It should be observed, that this frightful description of the Hindoo Supreme Being does not relate to the ferocious Kalēē, drinking the blood of the giants; but it is the playful Krishnū who thus shews his dreadful teeth, with the mangled bodies of the family of Dhritūrashtrū sticking between them.

No question occurs so frequently in the Hindoo shastrūs as this

\* Wilkins's translation of the Bhūgūvūtū-Gēeta.

—‘What is God?’ To know whether he exists or not, page upon page has been written; and this question has been agitated in every period of Hindoo history, wherever two or three pūndits happened to meet, with a solicitude, but, at the same time, with an uncertainty, which carries us at once to the apostolic declaration, ‘The world by wisdom knew not God.’ Some pūndits call him the invisible and ever-blessed; others conceive of him as possessing form: others have the idea that he exists like an inconceivably small atom; sometimes he is male; at other times female; sometimes both male and female, producing a world by conjugal union; sometimes the elements assume his place, and at other times he is a deified hero. Thus in 330,000,000 of forms, or names, this nation, in the emphatical language of St. Paul, has been, from age to age, ‘feeling after’ the Supreme Being, like men groping ‘in the region and shadow of death;’ and, after so many centuries, the question is as much undetermined as ever—What is God?

One day, in conversation with the Sūṅskritū head-pūndit of the College of Fort William, on the subject of God, this man, who is truly learned in his own shastrūs, gave the author, from one of their books, the following parable:—In a certain country there existed a village of blind men, who had heard of an amazing animal called the elephant, of the shape of which, however, they could procure no idea. One day an elephant passed through the place: the villagers crowded to the spot where the animal was standing; and one of them seized his trunk, another his ear, another his tail, another one of his legs. After thus endeavouring to gratify their curiosity, they returned into the village, and sitting down together, began to communicate their ideas on the shape of the elephant to the villagers: the man who had seized his trunk said, he thought this animal must be like the body of the plantain tree; he who had touched his ear was of opinion, that he was like the winnowing fan; the man who had laid hold of his tail said, he thought he must resemble a snake; and he who had caught his leg declared, he must be like a pillar. An old blind man of some judgment was

present, who, though greatly perplexed in attempting to reconcile these jarring notions, at length said—‘ You have all been to examine this animal, and what you report, therefore, cannot be false: I suppose, then, that the part resembling the plantain tree must be his trunk; what you thought similar to a fan must be his ear; the part like a snake must be the tail; and that like a pillar must be his leg.’ In this way the old man, uniting all their conjectures, made out something of the form of the elephant.—Respecting God, added the pundit, ‘ we are all blind; none of us have seen him; those who wrote the shastrs, like the old blind man, have collected all the reasonings and conjectures of mankind together, and have endeavoured to form some idea of the nature of the divine Being<sup>e</sup>.’ It is an irresistible argument in favour of the majesty, simplicity, and truth of the Holy Scriptures, that nothing of this uncertainty has been left on the mind of the most illiterate Christian. However mysterious the subject, we never hear such a question started in Christian countries—What is God?

The doctrine of a plurality of gods, with their consequent intrigues, criminal amours, quarrels, and stratagems to counteract each other, has produced the most fatal effects on the minds of men. Can we expect a people to be better than their gods? Brūmha was inflamed with evil desires towards his own daughter<sup>f</sup>.—Vishnoo, when incarnate as Bamūnū, deceived king Būlee, and deprived him of his kingdom<sup>g</sup>.—Shivū’s wife was constantly jealous on account of his amours, and charged him with associating with the women of a low cast at Cooch-Bihar. The story of Shivū and Mohinēē, a female form of Vishnoo, is shockingly indelicate<sup>h</sup>.—Vrihūspūtee, the spiritual guide of the gods, committed a rape on his eldest brother’s wife<sup>i</sup>.—Indrū was guilty of dishonouring the wife of his spiritual guide<sup>k</sup>.—Sōōryū ravished a virgin named Koontee<sup>l</sup>.—Yūmū, in a passion, kicked his own mother, who cursed him, and afflicted him with

<sup>e</sup> Acts xvii. 27.

<sup>f</sup> See Kalika pooranū.

<sup>g</sup> See Mūhabharātū.

<sup>h</sup> Ibid.

<sup>i</sup> Ibid.

<sup>k</sup> Ibid.

<sup>l</sup> Ibid.

a swelled leg, which to this day the worms are constantly devouring<sup>m</sup>.—Ugnee was inflamed with evil desires towards six virgins, the daughters of as many sages; but was overawed by the presence of his wife<sup>n</sup>.—Būlūramū was a great drunkard<sup>o</sup>.—Vayoo was cursed by Dūkshū, for making his daughters crooked when they refused his embraces. He is also charged with a scandalous connection with a female monkey<sup>p</sup>.—When Vūroonū was walking in his own heaven, he was so smitten with the charms of Oorvūshēē, a courtesan, that, after a long contest, she was scarcely able to extricate herself from him<sup>q</sup>.—Krishnū's thefts, wars, and adulteries are so numerous, that his whole history seems to be one uninterrupted series of crimes<sup>r</sup>.—In the images of Kalēē, she is represented as treading on the breast of her husband<sup>s</sup>.—Lūkshmēē and Sūrūswūtēē, the wives of Vishnoo, were continually quarrelling<sup>t</sup>.—It is worthy of enquiry, how the world is governed by these gods more wicked than men, that we may be able to judge how far they can be the objects of faith, hope, and affection. Let us open the Hindoo sacred writings: here we see the Creator and the Preserver perpetually counteracting each other. Sometimes the Preserver is destroying, and at other times the Destroyer is preserving. On a certain occasion<sup>u</sup>, Shivū granted to the great enemy of the gods, Ravūnū, a blessing which set all their heavens in an uproar, and drove the 330,000,000 of gods into a state of desperation. Brūmha created Koombhū-kūrnū, a monster larger than the whole island of Lūnka; but was obliged to doom him to an almost perpetual sleep, to prevent his producing an universal famine. This god is often represented as bestowing a blessing, to remove the effects of which Vishnoo is obliged to become incarnate: nay, these effects have not in some cases been removed till all the gods have been dispossessed of their thrones, and obliged to go a begging; till all human affairs have been thrown into confusion, and all the elements seized and turned against

<sup>m</sup> See Mūhabharātū.<sup>n</sup> Ibid.<sup>o</sup> Ibid.<sup>p</sup> See Ramayātū.<sup>q</sup> Ibid.<sup>r</sup> See the Shrēē-bhagūvītū.<sup>s</sup> See the Markūndēyū

pooranū.

<sup>t</sup> See the Vrihūddhūrmū pooranū.<sup>u</sup> See the Ramayātū.

the Creator, the Preserver, and the Reproducer. When some giant, blessed by Brümha, has destroyed the creation, Vishnool and Shivü have been applied to; but they have confessed that they could do nothing for the tottering universe.

Reverence for the gods, especially among the poor, as might be expected, does not exceed their merits; yet it is a shocking fact, that language like the following should be used, respecting what the Hindoos suppose to be the Providence which governs the world:—when it thunders awfully, respectable Hindoos say, ‘Oh! the gods are giving us a bad day;’ the lower orders say, ‘The rascally gods are dying.’ During a heavy rain, a woman of respectable cast frequently says, ‘Let the gods perish! my clothes are all wet.’ A man of low cast says, ‘These rascally gods are sending more rain.’

In witnessing such a state of gross ignorance, on a subject of infinite moment to men, how forcibly do we feel the truth and the wisdom of the declaration of the Divine Author of the Christian religion, ‘This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God!’ A correct knowledge of the Divine perfections, in the mind of a sincere Christian, is a treasure which transcends in value all the riches of the earth: for instance, how much does the doctrine of the Divine Unity tend to fix the hope and joy of the Christian! but the poor Hindoo knows not, amongst so many gods, upon whom to call, or in whom to trust. In the spirituality of the Divine Nature, united to omniscience and omnipresence, the Christian finds a large field for the purest and most sublime contemplations; but the degraded idolater, walking round his pantheon, sees beings that fill him only with shame or terror: he retires from the image of Kalêe overwhelmed with horror, and from those of Radha-Krishnû with confusion and contempt—or else inflamed with concupiscence. How effectual to awaken the fears and excite the salutary apprehensions of those who neglect their best interests, is the scripture doctrine of the Divine Purity and Justice; but the wretched Hindoo has the examples of the most corrupt beings, even in his



gods, to lead him to perdition. How necessary to the happiness of a good man, are just ideas of the wisdom, and equity, and beneficence, of providential dispensations:—the reader has seen how impossible it is for a Hindoo to derive the smallest consolation in adversity from the doctrine of the shastrûs respecting the government of the world. How consoling to a person, sensible of many failings, is the doctrine of the Divine Mercy:—but these heathens have nothing held out to encourage the hopes of the penitent; nothing short of perfect abstraction, and the extinction of every desire, qualify for deliverance from matter.—The sincere Christian, with his knowledge of God, ‘casteth all his care on his Father, who is in heaven;’ and the language of his mind, invigorated by the living waters flowing from the fountain of eternal truth, is, ‘Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel;’ ‘Though I walk through the valley and even the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.’

The Hindoo writings farther teach, that it is the Great Spirit which is diffused through every form of animated matter; that actions of every kind are his; that he is the charioteer, and the body the chariot<sup>x</sup>; that it is the highest attainment of human wisdom to realize the fact, that the human soul and Brûmhû are one and the same. By this doctrine all accountability is destroyed, and liability to punishment rendered preposterous. How often has the author heard it urged by the most sensible Hindoos, that the moving cause of every action, however flagitious, is God; that man is an instrument upon which God plays what tune he pleases. Another modification of this doctrine is that of fate, or unchangeable destiny, embraced, without a dissentient voice, by all the Hindoos. Thus the Deity on his throne is insulted as the author of all crimes, and men are emboldened to rush forward in the swiftest career of iniquity.

The sacred writings of the Hindoos encourage the bramhûns

<sup>x</sup> See the Védantû-sarû.

to despise the great body of the people, and teach them, that the very sight and touch of a shōōdrū renders them unclean. To be contented in ignorance is the duty of a shōōdrū, as well as to drink with reverence and hope the water in which the bramhūn has dipped his foot. The services too and the hopes held forth by this religion, are almost exclusively confined to the bramhūns. The shōōdrū is supposed to be born to evil destiny; and the only hope he can indulge in, that after a long succession of transmigrations he may probably be born a bramhūn.

The subjugation of the passions, so much insisted upon in the Hindoo shastrūs, applies to all virtuous as well as vicious desires. The person who is divested of all desire, even that of obtaining God, is described as having arrived at the summit of perfection. The love of parents, of children, &c. is an imperfection, according to the Hindoo code: hence says Krishnū, 'Wisdom is exemption from attachment and affection for children, wife, and home.'

These shastrūs also teach,\* that sin may be removed by the slightest ceremony; and thus, instead of reforming, they promise impunity in transgression. See different stories in vol. i. pp. 82, 272, 277.

The ūt'hūrvū védū contains many prayers for the destruction

\* At the time a learned native was assisting the Rev. Mr. Carey in the translation of the New Testament into the Singskritū, when such passages as these were translating, 'Henceforth know I no man after the flesh;' 'We are dead, and our life is hid,' &c. 'I am crucified to the world;' 'We are fools for Christ;' 'We are made a spectacle,' &c. he exclaimed, 'This is pure voiragēism: Paul was a true Pūrūm-hingsēē.' Yet the divine principles upon which Paul trampled upon the world, and devoted himself supremely to God, have no existence in the shastrūs. The Hindoo principle is mere stoicism; its origin is either selfishness, or infatuated ambition: but the principle of the apostle, was the love of Christ who died on a cross for his enemies—as he himself says, 'The love of Christ, like an irresistible torrent, bears us away;' 'If we are beside ourselves, it is for your sakes.'

of enemies; and gives a list of offerings proper to be presented to Bhūgūvūtē, that she may be induced to assist in the gratification of revengeful passions: among the rest, the worshipper is to make a paste image of a man, cut off its head, and offer this head to the goddess, with a burnt-sacrifice, &c. Is it not reasonable to suppose, that human sacrifices preceded the cutting off the head of this man of paste; and that one man was sacrificed and offered to the gods to induce them to destroy another?

In the Institutes of Mūnoo a man is allowed to commit adultery, if the female consent; to steal, for the sake of performing a religious ceremony; and to perjure himself, from benevolent motives: they also allow of lying, to preserve the life of a bramhūn, to appease an angry wife, or to please a mistress\*. What is still worse, in this code a bramhūn, in case of want, is permitted to steal, not from the rich merely, but—from his slave! It is a common sentiment among this people, that in secular transactions lying is absolutely necessary; and perjury is so common, that it is impossible to rely upon the testimony of Hindoo witnesses. The natives ridicule the idea of administering justice by oral testimony.

I have given in vol. ii. p. 172, a few examples of persons raised to heaven by their own works, to shew that these works have nothing to do with real morality. But how shall we describe the unutterable abominations connected with the popular

\* ‘If a man, by the impulse of lust, tell lies to a woman, or if his own life would otherwise be lost, or all the goods of his house spoiled, or if it is for the benefit of a bramhūn, in such affairs falsehood is allowable.’ *Halhed’s Code of Gentoo Laws*.—How can we wonder that the Hindoos should be so addicted to falsehood, when even in the rig-vēdū, approached with profound reverence by so many Christian infidels, we find monstrous exaggerations like the following?—‘Bhūrūtū distributed in Mūshnarūtū a hundred and seven thousand millions of black elephants with white tusks, and decked with gold.’ ‘A sacred fire was lighted for Bhūrūtū, son of Dooshūrūtū, in Sachigoonū, at which a thousand bramhūns shared a thousand millions of cows apiece.’ See *Mr. Colebrooke’s Essay*.

superstition? The author has witnessed scenes which can be clothed in no language, and has heard of other abominations practised in the midst of religious rites, and in the presence of the gods, which, if they could be described, would fill the whole Christian world with disgust and horror. Let impenetrable darkness cover them till 'the judgment of the great day.'

Men are sufficiently corrupt by nature, without any outward excitements to evil in the public festivals; nor have civil nor spiritual terrors, the frowns of God and governors united, been found sufficient to keep within restraint the overflowings of iniquity:—but what must be the moral state of that country, where the sacred festivals, and the very forms of religion, lead men to every species of vice! These festivals and public exhibitions excite universal attention, and absorb, for weeks together, almost the whole of the public conversation: and such is the enthusiasm with which they are hailed, that the whole country seems to be thrown into a ferment: health, property, time, business, every thing is sacrificed to them. In this manner are the people prepared to receive impressions from their national institutions. If these institutions were favourable to virtue, the effects would be most happy; but as, in addition to their fascination, they are exceedingly calculated to corrupt the mind, the most dreadful consequences follow, and vice, like a mighty torrent, flows through the plains of Bengal, with the force of the flood-tide of the Ganges, carrying along with it young and old, the learned and the ignorant, rich and poor, all casts and descriptions of people—into an awful eternity!

In short, the characters of the gods, and the licentiousness which prevails at their festivals, and abounds in their popular works, with the enervating nature of the climate, have made the Hindoos the most effeminate and corrupt people on earth. I have, in the course of this work, exhibited so many proofs of this fact, that I will not again disgust the reader by going into the subject. Suffice it to say, that fidelity to marriage vows is almost unknown

among the Hindoos ; the intercourse of the sexes approaches very near to that of the irrational animals. The husband almost invariably lives in criminal intercourse during the pupilage of his infant wife ; and she, if she becomes a widow, cannot marry, and in consequence, being destitute of a protector and of every moral principle, becomes a willing prey to the lascivious.

Add to all this, the almost incredible number of human victims which annually fall in this Aceldama. I have ventured on an estimate of the number of Hindoos who annually perish, the victims of the bramhinal religion ; (vol. ii. p. 127,) and have supposed, that they cannot amount to less than 10,500 ! Every additional information I obtain, and the opinions of the best informed persons with whom I am acquainted, confirm me in the opinion, that this estimate is too low, that the havock is far greater, however difficult it may be to bring the mind to contemplate a scene of horror which outdoes all that has ever been perpetrated in the name of religion by all the savage nations put together. These cruelties, together with the contempt which the Hindoos feel for the body as a mere temporary shell, cast off at pleasure, and the disorganizing effects of the cast, render them exceedingly unfeeling and cruel : of which their want of every national provision for the destitute ; their leaving multitudes to perish before their own doors, unpitied and even unnoticed ; the inhuman manner in which they burn the bodies of their deceased relations, and their savage triumph when spectators of a widow burning in the flames of the funeral pile, are awful examples.

But to know the Hindoo idolatry, AS IT IS, a person must wade through the filth of the thirty-six pooranūs and other popular books—he must read and hear the modern popular poems and songs—he must follow the bramhūn through his midnight orgies, before the image of Kalēē, and other goddesses ; or he must accompany him to the nightly revels, the jatras, and listen to the filthy dialogues which are rehearsed respecting Krishnū and the daughters of the milkmen ; or he must watch him, at midnight, choking, with the mud and waters of the Ganges, a

wealthy rich relation, while in the delirium of a fever ; or, at the same hour, while murdering an unfaithful wife, or a supposed domestic enemy ; burning the body before it is cold, and washing the blood from his hands in the sacred stream of the Ganges ; or he must look at the bramhūn, hurrying the trembling half-dead widow round the funeral pile, and throwing her, like a log of wood, by the side of the dead body of her husband, tying her, and then holding her down with bamboo levers till the fire has deprived her of the power of rising and running away.—After he has followed the bramhūn through all these horrors, he will only have approached the threshold of this temple of Moloch, and he will begin to be convinced, that to know the Hindoo idolatry, AS IT IS, a man must become a Hindoo—rather, he must become a bramhūn ; for a poor shōōdrū, by the very circumstances of his degradation, is restrained from many abominations which bramhūns alone are privileged to commit. And when he has done this, let him meditate on this system in its effects on the mind of the afflicted or dying Hindoo, as described in vol. ii. pp. 163, 164, and 176 ; on reading which description he will perceive, that in distress the Hindoo utters the loudest murmurs against the gods, and dies in the greatest perplexity and agitation of mind.

The state of things serves to explain the mysterious dispensations of Providence, in permitting the Hindoos to remain so long in darkness, and in causing them to suffer so much formerly under their Mahometan oppressors. The murder of so many myriads of victims has armed heaven against them. Let us hope that now, in the midst of judgment, a gracious Providence has remembered mercy, and placed them under the fostering care of the British government, that they may enjoy a happiness to which they have been hitherto strangers.

If then this system of heathenism communicates no purifying knowledge of the divine perfections, supplies no one motive to holiness while living, no comfort to the afflicted, no hope to the dying ; but on the contrary excites to every vice, and hardens its followers in the most flagrant crimes ; how are we to account for

the conduct of its apologists, except in the recollection, that the sceptical part of mankind have always been partial to heathenism. Voltaire, Gibbon, Hume, &c. have been often charged with a strong partiality for the Grecian and Roman idolatries; and many Europeans in India are suspected of having made large strides towards heathenism. Even Sir Wm. Jones, whose recommendation of the Holy Scriptures (found in his Bible after his death) has been so often and so deservedly quoted, it is said, to please his pundit, was accustomed to study the shastris with the image of a Hindoo god placed on his table:—his fine metrical translations of idolatrous hymns are known to every lover of verse<sup>d</sup>. In the same spirit, we observe, that figures and allusions to the ancient idolatries are retained in almost all modern poetical compositions, and even in some Christian writings.

However wonderful this partiality of professed Christians to heathenism may be, it is not more extraordinary than the extravagant lengths into which some learned men have gone in their expectations from the antiquity of the Hindoo writings. Mr. Halhed seems to prefer Hindooism to Christianity purely on account of its boasted antiquity<sup>d</sup>. Dr. Stiles, president of Yale

<sup>d</sup> 'I could not help feeling a degree of regret, in reading lately the Memoirs of the admirable and estimable Sir William Jones. Some of his researches in Asia have no doubt incidentally served the cause of religion; but did he think the last possible direct service had been rendered to Christianity, that his accomplished mind was left at leisure for hymns to the Hindoo gods? Was not this a violation even of the neutrality, and an offence, not only against the gospel, but against theism itself? I know what may be said about personification, license of poetry, and so on: but should not a worshipper of God hold himself under a solemn obligation to abjure all tolerance of even poetical figures that can seriously seem, in any way whatever, to recognize the pagan divinities, or abominations, as the prophets of Jehovah would have called them? What would Elijah have said to such an employment of talents? It would have availed little to have told him, that these divinities were only personifications (with their appropriate representative idols) of objects in nature, of elements, or of abstractions. He would have sternly replied—And was not Baal, whose prophets I destroyed, the same?' See *Foster's incomparable Essays*.

\* Is Mr. Halhed an example of the amazing credulity of unbelievers in



College, in North America, formed such an enthusiastic expectation from the amazing antiquity of the Hindoo writings, that he actually wrote to Sir William Jones, to request him to search among the Hindoos for the Adamic books. Had not this gentleman been a zealous Christian, it is likely his extravagant expectations might have led him to ask Sir William to translate and send him a book two or three millions of years old, written in some kŭlpŭ amidst the endless succession of worlds.

For some time, a very unjust and unhappy impression appeared to have been made on the public mind, by the encomiums passed on the Hindoo writings. In the first place, they were thus elevated in their antiquity beyond the Christian scriptures, the writings of Moses having been called the productions of yesterday, compared with those of the brambhŭns. The contents of these books also were treated with the greatest reverence; the primitive religion of the Hindoos, it was said, revealed the most sublime doctrines, and inculcated a pure morality. We were taught to make the greatest distinction between the ancient and modern religion of the Hindoos; for the apologists for Hindooism did not approve of its being judged of by present appearances. Some persons endeavoured to persuade us, that the Hindoos were not

every case wherein the *Holy Bible* is not concerned? When he wrote his 'Code of Gentoo Laws,' he hesitated to believe the Bible, because it was outdone in chronology by the histories of the Chinese and Hindoos. With sacred reverence he exclaims, at the close of his account of the four yoo-gŭs, 'To such antiquity the Mosaic creation is but as yesterday; and to such ages the life of Methuselah is no more than a span!' He says, in another page, 'The conscientious scruples of Brydone will always be of some weight in the scale of philosophy.' If the age or reign of Brŭmha, viz. 55,987,200,000,000 years, excited such sacred awe in the mind of this gentleman, what would have been his sensations, and how strong his faith in the 'holy writ' of the Hindoos, if he had happened to read in the Ramayŭnŭ the account of Ramŭ's army; which, this 'holy writ' says, amounted to 1,000,000,000,000,000,000 soldiers, or rather monkies? Again, two thousand times the four yoo-gŭs, or 8,640,000,000 years, is the age of the sage Markŭndĕkŭ! What, in the name of Mr. Halhed, is the life of Methuselah to this?—This unbeliever in Moses became at last, it is said, a firm believer in *Richard Brothers*!

idolaters, because they maintained the unity of God; though they worshipped the works of their own hands as God, and though the number of their gods was 330,000,000. It is very probable, that the unity of God has been a sentiment amongst the philosophers of every age; and that they wished it to be understood, that they worshipped the One God, whether they bowed before the image of Moloch, Jupiter, or Kalēē: yet mankind have generally concluded, that he who worships an image is an idolater; and I suppose they will continue to think so, unless, in this age of reason, common sense should be turned out of doors.

Now, however, the world has had some opportunity of deciding upon the claims of the Hindoo writings, both as it respects their antiquity, and the value of their contents. Mr. Colebrooke's essay on the védūs, and his other important translations; the Bhūgūvīt-Gēēta, translated by Mr. Wilkins; the translation of the Ramayānū, several volumes of which have been printed; some valuable papers in the Asiatic Researches; with other translations by different Sūngskritū scholars; have thrown a great body of light on this subject:—and this light is daily increasing.

Many an object appears beautiful when seen at a distance, and through a mist; but when the fog has dispersed, and the person has approached it, he smiles at the deception. Such is the exact case with these books, and this system of idolatry. Because the public, for want of being more familiar with the subject, could not ascertain the point of time when the Hindoo shastrūs were written, they therefore at once believed the assertions of the bramhūns and their friends, that their antiquity was unfathomable.

The Reverend Mr. Maurice has attempted to describe the Hindoo ceremonies, which he never saw, in the most captivating terms, and has painted these 'abominable idolatries' in the most florid colours. It might have been expected, (idolatry being in itself an act so degrading to man, and so dishonourable

to God,) that a Christian divine would have been shocked while writing in this manner. If Mr. Maurice think there is something in Hindooism to excite the most sublime ideas, let him come and join in the dance before the idol;—or assist the bramhūns in crying *Hūree bul! Hūree bul!* while the fire is seizing the limbs of the young and unfortunate Hindoo widow;—or let him attend at the sacrificing of animals before the images of Kalēē and Doorga;—or come and join in the dance, stark naked, in the public street, in open day, before the image of Doorga, in the presence of thousands of spectators, young and old, male and female. He will find, that the sight will never make these holy bramhūns, these mild and innocent Hindoos, blush for a moment.—Seriously, should sights like these raise the ardour of enthusiasm, or chill the blood of a Christian minister? Say, ye who blush for human nature sunk in shame. As a clergyman, Mr. Maurice should have known, that antiquity sanctifies nothing:—‘The sinner, being an hundred years old, shall be accursed.’

What will a sober Christian say to the two following paragraphs, inserted in the fifth volume of the *Indian Antiquities*? ‘Mr. Forbes, of Stanmore-hill, in his elegant museum of Indian rarities, numbers two of the bells that have been used in devotion by the bramhūns. They are great curiosities, and one of them in particular appears to be of very high antiquity, in form very much resembling the cup of the lotos; and the tune of it is uncommonly soft and melodious. I could not avoid being

‘ Sounds of triumph, which the bramhūns use when the fire of the funeral pile begins to burn, and when they are choking a dying person with the water of the Ganges. These words literally mean, ‘call upon Hūree,’ or repeat the name of Hūree, viz. *Kṛishṇā*. In their popular use, they are like the English phrase, *huzza! huzza!*

‘ While the author cannot but withhold his assent from Mr. Maurice’s application of the Hindoo triad, and the whole of his attempt to illustrate Scripture doctrines from the ancient systems of idolatry, he embraces this opportunity of expressing his admiration of the great merit of this singular and masterly work.

deeply affected with the sound of an instrument which had been actually employed to kindle the flame of that superstition, which I have attempted so extensively to unfold. My transported thoughts travelled back to the remote period, when the bramhūn religion blazed forth in all its splendour in the caverns of Elephanta: I was, for a moment, entranced, and caught the ardour of enthusiasm. A tribe of venerable priests, arrayed in flowing stoles, and decorated with high tiaras, seemed assembled around me; the mystic song of initiation vibrated in my ear; I breathed an air fragrant with the richest perfumes, and contemplated the Deity in the fire that symbolized him.' In another place:—'She [the Hindoo religion] wears the similitude of a beautiful and radiant CHERUB from HEAVEN, bearing on his persuasive lips the accents of pardon and peace, and on his silken wings benefaction and blessing.'

The sacred scriptures, of which this writer professes to be a teacher, in every part, mark idolatry as THE ABOMINABLE THING WHICH GOD HATETH. Mr. Maurice calls it, 'a beautiful and radiant cherub from heaven.' How this Christian minister will reconcile his ideas of idolatry with those of his GREAT MASTER in the great day of final account, I must leave; but I recommend to him, and to all Europeans who think there is not much harm in Hindooism, the perusal of the following passages from the word of the TRUE and LIVING GOD:—

'If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; (namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth;) thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: but thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all

the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die, because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. And all Israel shall hear and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you.' *Deut.* xiii. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.—I quote this remarkable passage, not because I think the Christian dispensation allows of punishing idolaters with death, but to shew how marked is the divine abhorrence of this sin.

'And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcases upon the carcases of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you.' *Leviticus* xxvi. 30.—'Cursed be the man that maketh any *graven image*, any *graven* or *molten image*, an abomination unto the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsmen, and putteth it in a secret place. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen.' *Deut.* xxvii. 15.—'Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, Ye have seen all the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, and upon all the cities of Judah; and, behold, this day they are a desolation, and no man dwelleth therein. Because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke me to anger, in that they went to burn incense, and to serve *other gods*, whom they knew not, neither they, ye, nor your fathers. Howbeit, I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, O DO NOT THIS ABOMINABLE THING THAT I HATE. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense unto *other gods*. Wherefore my fury and mine anger was poured forth, and was kindled in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem; and they are wasted and desolate, as at this day.' *Jeremiah* xlv. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.—'And what agreement hath the temple of God with *idols*?' *2 Cor.* vi. 16.—'For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and *abominable idolatries*.' *1 Peter* iv. 3.—'But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whore-

mongers, and sorcerers, and *idolaters*, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone : which is the second death.' *Rev.* xxi. 3.

Let every conscientious Christian fairly weigh these portions of the divine word, and then say, whether there be not, according to the spirit of these passages, a great degree of criminality attached to the person who in any way countenances idolatry. I am not ashamed to confess, that I fear more for the continuance of the British power in India, from the encouragement which Englishmen have given to the idolatry of the Hindoos, than from any other quarter whatever. The Governor of the world said to the Israelites, in particular reference to idolatry, 'If ye walk contrary to me, I will walk contrary to you.' Moses, in the name of Jehovah, thus threatens the Jews, if they countenance idolatry:—'I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it: ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed.' It cannot be doubted, that in every case in which either a person, or a nation, begins to think favourably of idolatry, it is a mark of departure in heart and practice from the living God: it was always so considered among the Jews. There is scarcely any thing in Hindooism, when truly known, in which a learned man can delight, or of which a benevolent man can approve; and I am fully persuaded, that there will soon be but one opinion on the subject, and that this opinion will be, that the Hindoo system is less ancient than the Egyptian, and that it is the most PUERILE, IMPURE, AND BLOODY OF ANY SYSTEM OF IDOLATRY THAT WAS EVER ESTABLISHED ON EARTH.

To this description of the Hindoo Mythology, the author has added accounts of the principal Hindoo Seceders, including the sects founded by Booddhū, Rishūbhū-dévū, Nanūkū, and Choi-tūnyū.

All the founders of these sects appear to have been religious

mendicants, who, animated by excessive enthusiasm, have attempted to carry certain points of the Hindoo system farther than the regular Hindoos, particularly those which respect severe mortifications. Nanūkū and Choitūnyū were less rigid, and do not seem to have pressed the importance of religious austerities. Booddhū and Rishūbhū-dévū evidently adhered to the systems of those Hindoo philosophers who were atheists<sup>b</sup>.

Both these systems are comprised in two or three doctrines :—the world is eternal, and possesses in itself the energy which gives rise to what we call creation, preservation, and resuscitation ; religion (Dhūrmū) regulates all states, and is in fact what Christians call providence, connected with absolute predestination ; the person who acquires the greatest portion of dhūrmū becomes a personification of religion, procures happiness for himself, and deserves the worship of others. Amongst all excellent qualities, compassion is the cardinal virtue, especially as manifested in a rigid care not to hurt or destroy sentient beings.

Without abating, an atom of our abhorrence and contempt of a scheme of religion which excludes a God, it is a singular feature of this system of atheism, that it has placed the sceptre of universal government in an imagined being under the name of Religion ; or, to speak more correctly, in the hands of two beings, Religion and Irreligion, who have the power of rewarding and punishing the virtuous and the vicious. In short, these heresiarchs have not promulgated a system of atheism, without making some provision for the interests of morality in their way ; and if the idea of punishment alone would make men virtuous, a Bouddhū and a Joinū might attain a place in the niche of fame not much below thousands who believe in a First Cause.

<sup>b</sup> The Shrēe-bhagūvūtū mentions Booddhū as the son of Unjūnū, of Kēekūtū ; and that Charvvakū, a celebrated atheist, embraced and published the real opinions of Booddhū. See Shrēe-bhagūvūtū, chap. i. sect. 3.



As men are born under a certain destiny, and as every action produces its destined fruit, little is left to human exertion, and in consequence religious ceremonies have little place in these systems. The only object of worship is a deceased or living perfect ascetic: the former has temples erected to his memory, which contain his image, and before which a few ceremonies are performed similar to those before the Hindoo idols; and the living mendicant is worshipped by the devout wherever he happens to rest from his peregrinations.

These men have almost entirely excluded from their system a social life; and at present those Joinūs, who find the rules of their guides too strict, are obliged to solicit the forms of marriage at the hands of some Hindoo priest. In the translation of the *Témee Jatū*, a Bouddhū work, (see vol. ii. p. 221,) the reader will perceive, that a monarch and all his subjects abandoned a civil life at the call of the monarch's son, an ascetic, and sought in a forest that abstraction from secular concerns which they considered as an essential preparation for re-union to the divine essence.

The ceremonies of these two sects are all comprised in the worshipping of their saints, rehearsing their praises, listening to their sayings or written works, and a rigid care to avoid the destruction of animal life, even in its most diminutive forms. The Bouddhūs and Joinūs have not excluded, it is true, every thing pleasant from their religion, for a number of festivals are celebrated among them monthly or annually; but there is reason to suppose, that these are no parts of the original system, but the additions of mendicants less rigid in their principles and less austere in their manners.

The Joinūs speak of the Bouddhūs with a degree of contempt, as being very loose in their practice, particularly as it regards the destruction of animal life. From this circumstance, and from the Joinūs being still found in Hindoost'hanū, as well as from the fact that they trace their religion up to a very early

Hindoo monarch, it may be conjectured, that they are the oldest of the two sects, and are the scattered remnants of those persecuted under the name of atheists, after the destruction of the Goutūmā dynasty, or, as they were then called, Bouddhūs.

Nanūkū, the Shikh' leader, does not appear to have had any connection with the atheists; he disapproved of the excessive polytheism of the Hindoos, and wished to draw them to the worship of the one God, whom, however, he called by the names usually adopted by the Hindoos: Brūmhū, Pūrūm-éshwūrū, Unadee, Nirakarū, &c. He did not publicly reprobate those parts of the Hindoo system to which he was most averse, but contented himself with observing, that while he left them indifferent, the practice of them would not be accompanied with the benefits held out by the Hindoo writers. He formed, from the bramhinal system, a new one, having little polytheism in it, but borrowing all its principal doctrines from the Hindoo writings; and he and his successors incorporated the whole in two volumes. The principal tenets of this seceder are:—There is one invisible God, who is to be worshipped or honoured in holy men; his name is to be repeated; the spiritual guide is to be revered; all evil avoided: if images be adopted, they should be those of eminent ascetics. Future happiness, consisting in union to the divine nature, is secured to those Shikhs who observe the rules laid down by their sacred books.

Choitūnyū, the last of the seceders, departed still less from regular Hindooism: his principal opposition was aimed at the rising sect of the shaktūs, or those who worship the female deities with bloody sacrifices: he testified his abhorrence of the destruction of animal life in sacrifices, and professed to be a rigid Voishnūvū, adopting Krishnū, or Hūree, as his favourite deity. He did not proscribe the other gods, but set up Vishnoo as uniting all in himself; nor did he explode any tenet of Hindooism beside that relating to bloody sacrifices. A devout attachment to Krishnū; a strict union among all his followers; reverence for religious mendicants; visiting holy places; re-

peating the name of Hūree, and entertaining mendicant Voish-nūvūs, compose the prime articles in the creed of this sect.

Such are the systems established by these Hindoo heresiarchs, each of which, though different in many essential points, is distinguished by one remarkable feature, reverence for mendicant saints, especially those who seem to have carried abstraction of mind, seclusion from the world, and religious austerities to the greatest lengths. Among the atheistical sects, these mendicants are regarded as personifications of religion; and among the two last, as partial incarnations, or persons approaching the state of re-union to the Great Spirit.

Respecting the priority of the atheistical or the bramhinal systems, the author has not been able entirely to satisfy his own mind. Some persons conjecture, that they see a coincidence betwixt the doctrines of the védūs, and of the atheistical sects, respecting the origin of things, and the worship of the elements. It may be safely added, that to these systems succeeded the pouranic mythology, and after that the worship of the female deities with bloody sacrifices. The whole of these systems, however, when more generally known, will, no doubt, exceedingly endear the 'WORD OF TRUTH' to every sincere Christian, and more and more prove, how deep and important a stake he has in the '*glorious gospel of the BLESSED GOD.*'

THE  
HINDOO MYTHOLOGY.

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BOOK I.

OBJECTS OF WORSHIP.

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CHAP. I.

OF GOD.

IT is a painful reflection to every benevolent mind, that not a single Hindoo temple, dedicated to the ONE GOD, is to be found in all Hindoost'han; nor is any act of worship, in any form, addressed by this people to God. The doctrines respecting the Divine Nature are considered as mere philosophical speculations, totally unconnected with religious services.

It is true, indeed, that the Hindoos believe in the unity of God. 'One Brūmhū, without a second,' is a phrase very commonly used by them when conversing on subjects which relate to the nature of God. They believe also that God is almighty, allwise, omnipresent, omniscient, &c. and they frequently speak of him as embracing in his government the happiness of the good, and the subjection or punishment of the bad: yet they have no idea of God's performing any act, either of creation or providence, except through the gods; and thus are prevented all the beneficial effects which might have arisen out of their

notions of the divine perfections: for in the whole of the reigning superstition the gods alone are seen; and these gods bear no more resemblance to the one true God, than darkness to light, than vice to virtue.

Perceiving, therefore, that the speculations of the Hindoo philosophers on the divine nature have no place whatever in the religion of the country, I have placed these dogmas in the preceding volume.

## CHAP. II.

### OF THE GODS.

**THE** deities in the Hindoo pantheon amount to 330,000,000. Yet all these gods and goddesses may be resolved into the three principal ones, Vishnoo, Shivū, and Brūmhā; the elements; and the three females, Doorga, Lūkshmēē, and Sūrāswatēē. The following pages will contain accounts of all those at present worshipped by the Hindoos, particularly in the provinces of India under the English government.

#### SECT. I.—*Vishnoo.*

**THIS** god is represented in the form of a black man, with four arms; in one of which he holds a club, in another a shell, in the third a chūkrū\*, and in the fourth a water-lily. He rides on Gūroorū, an animal half-bird and half-man, and wears yellow garments.

\* An iron instrument of destruction like a wheel.

The Hindoo shastrûs give accounts of ten appearances or incarnations of Vishnoo, in the character of the Preserver; nine of which are said to be past.

The first is called the Mûtsyû incarnation. Brûmhû<sup>b</sup>, the one God, when he resolves to recreate the universe after a periodical destruction, first gives birth to Brûmha, Vishnoo, and Shivû, to preside over the work of creation, preservation, and destruction. After a periodical dissolution of the universe, the four védûs remained in the waters. In order to enter upon the work of creation, it was necessary to obtain these books, for the instruction of Brûmha. Vishnoo was therefore appointed to bring up the védûs from the deep; who, taking the form of a fish, (some say one kind and some another,) descended into the waters, and brought up these sacred books.

In the Kûchyûpû incarnation Vishnoo assumed the form of a tortoise, and took the newly created earth upon his back, to render it stable. The Hindoos believe that to this hour the earth is supported on the back of this tortoise.

The Vûrahû incarnation happened at one of the periodical destructions of the world, when the earth sunk into the waters. Vishnoo, the preserver, appearing in the form of a boar (vûrahû), descended into the waters, and with his tusks drew up the earth. What contemptible ideas on such a subject! The earth, with all its mountains, &c. &c. made fast on the back of a turtle, or drawn up from the deep by the tusks of a hog!

<sup>b</sup> The reader will please keep in mind that Brûmhû means the one God, and that Brûmha means the idol of that name.

The fourth incarnation is called Nürü-singhū\*. Among other descendants of Dākshū, (the first man that Brümha created,) was Kūshyūpū, a moonee, and his four wives, Ditee, Ūditee, Vinūta, and Kūdoo. From Ditee, sprang the giants; from Ūditee, the gods; from Vinūta, Gūroorū; and from Kūdoo, the hydras. The giants possessed amazing strength, and amongst them two arose of terrific powers, named Hirūnyakshū and Hirūnyū-kūshipoo,\* both of whom performed religious austerities many thousand years to obtain immortality. Brümha at length gave them a blessing apparently equivalent to that which they desired. He promised, that no common being should destroy them; that they should not die either in the day or in the night, in earth or in heaven, by fire, by water, or by the sword. After this these giants conquered all the kingdoms of the earth, and even dethroned Indrū, the king of heaven. Indrū, collecting all the gods, went to Brümha, and intreated him to provide some way of deliverance, as the universe which he had created was destroyed. Brümha asked the gods, how he could destroy those who had obtained his blessing? and advised them to go to Vishnoo. They obeyed, and informed this god of the miseries brought upon the universe by these giants whom Brümha had blessed. Narayūnū promised to destroy them, which he did in the following manner: Hirūnyū-kūshipoo's son Prūhadū was constantly absent from home performing religious austerities, at which his father became angry, and, tying a stone to his body, threw him into the water; but Vishnoo descended, and liberated him. His father next threw him under the feet of an elephant; but the elephant took him up, and put him on its back. He then built a house of sealing wax, put his son into it, and set it on fire; the wax melted, and

\*From nārū, a man; and singhū, a lion



fell upon Prūḥadhū, but he received no injury. The father next gave him poison, but without effect. At length, wearied of trying to kill him, he said, 'Where does your pre-server Vishnoo dwell?' 'He is every where,' says Prūḥadhū. 'Is he then in this pillar?' 'Yes,' said the son. 'Then,' said Hirūnyū-kūshipoo, 'I will kill him,' and gave the pillar a blow with his stick—when Vishnoo, in the form of half-lion, half-man, burst from the pillar; laid hold of Hirūnyū-kūshipoo by the thighs with his teeth, and tore him up the middle. This was in the evening, so that it was neither in the day nor in the night; it was done under the droppings of the thatch, about which the Hindoos have a proverb, that this place is out of the earth; he was not killed by a man, but by a being half-man, half-lion: so that the promise of Brūmha to him was not broken. Vishnoo next destroyed Hirūnyakshū. After the death of his father, Prūḥadhū began to worship Vishnoo under the form which he had assumed, and with tears enquired into the future fate of his father. Vishnoo assured him, that as he had died by his hands, he would surely ascend to heaven. Vishnoo was so pleased with the praises which Prūḥadhū bestowed on him, that he began to dance, hanging the entrails of Hirūnyū-kūshipoo round his neck. By Vishnoo's dancing the earth began to move out of its place, so that Brūmha and all the gods were frightened, but durst not go near him. However, at the entreaties of Prūḥadhū, Vishnoo gave over dancing; the earth became fixed, and Vishnoo gave Prūḥadhū this promise, that by his hands none of his race should die.

The fifth is the Vamūnū incarnation. Prūḥadhū's grandson Bālee followed the steps of his great-grandfather, and committed every kind of violence. In contempt of the gods, he made offerings in his own name. He performed the ūshwūmédhū sacrifice one hundred times, by which he

was entitled to become the king of the gods ; but as the time of the then reigning Indrū was not expired, the latter applied for relief to Vishnoo, who promised to destroy this giant : to accomplish which he caused himself to be born of Ūditee, the wife of Kūshyūpū, the moonee. Being exceedingly small in his person, he obtained the name of Vamūnū, i. e. the dwarf. At a certain period king Būlee was making a great sacrifice, and Vamūnū's parents, being very poor, sent him to ask a gift of the king. It is customary, at a festival, to present gifts to bramhūns. Vamūnū was so small, that in his journey to the place of sacrifice, when he got to the side of a hole made by a cow's foot, and which was filled with water, he thought it was a river, and entreated another bramhūn to help him over it. On his arrival, he went to ask a gift of Būlee. The king was so pleased with him, on account of his diminutive form, that he promised to give him whatever he should ask. He petitioned only for as much land as he could measure by three steps. Būlee pressed him to ask for more; intimating that such a quantity was nothing; but Vamūnū persisted, and the king ordered his priest to read the usual formulas in making such a present. The priest warned the king, declaring he would repent of making this gift; for the little bramhūn was no other than Vishnoo himself, who would deprive him of all he had. The king, however, was determined to fulfil his promise, and the grant was made. Vamūnū then placed one foot on Indrū's heaven, and the other on the earth, when, lo ! a third leg suddenly projected from his belly, and he asked for a place upon which he might rest this third foot. Būlee, having nothing left, and being unable to fulfil his promise, was full of anxiety. His wife, having heard what was going forward, came to the spot, and, seeing the king's perplexity, advised him to give his head for Vamūnū to set his foot upon. He did so; but Vamūnū then asked for what is called dūkshinū, a small

present which accompanies a gift, and without which the gift itself produces no fruit to the giver. Būlee knew not what to do for dūkshinū: his all was gone. His wife advised him to give his life to Vamūnū as dūkshinū. He did this also; but the latter told him, that as he had promised Prūhadū not to destroy any of his race, he would not take his life. He therefore gave him his choice either of ascending to heaven, taking with him five ignorant persons; or of descending to patūlū, the world of the hydras, with five wise men<sup>d</sup>. Būlee chose the latter, but said that as he had done much mischief on earth, he was afraid of going to patūlū, lest he should there be punished for his crimes. Vamūnū told him not to fear, as he would, in the form of Vishnool, become his protector. At the close, this god, having restored every thing on earth to a state of order and prosperity, returned to heaven.

The sixth is the Pūrūshool-ramū incarnation. Pūrūshool is the name of an instrument of war. The occasion of this appearance of Vishnool is thus related:—The kshūtriyyū, from the king to the lowest person of this cast, were become very corrupt. Every one did as he pleased, the king was without authority, all order was destroyed, and the earth was in the greatest confusion. In these circumstances the goddess Prit'hivēē<sup>e</sup> went to Vishnool, and prayed for relief. Her petition was heard, and one part of Vishnool was incarnate as the son of Bhṛigū, a descendant of Bhṛigool the sage. After twenty-one different defeats the kshūtriyyū were exterminated by Pūrūshool-ramū; but after a lapse of years they again became numerous: Urjoolū, a

<sup>d</sup> It is a proverb among the Hindoos, that there is no pleasure in the company of the ignorant in any place or circumstances; and that a bad place, in the company of the wise, is better than a good one in that of the ignorant.

<sup>e</sup> The earth personified.

kshūtriya king with a thousand arms, overcame the greatest monarchs, and made dreadful havoc in the world: he beat Ravūnū, and tied him to the heels of a horse; but Brūmha delivered him, and reconciled them again. One evening in the rainy season, Ūrjoonū, being in the forest, took refuge in the hut of Jūmūdūgneē, the learned ascetic. He had with him 900,000 people; yet Jūmūdūgneē entertained them all. Ūrjoonū, astonished, enquired of his people how the sage, living in the forest, was able to entertain so many people? They could not tell; they saw nothing except a cow which Brūmha had given him; but it was by her means perhaps that he was able to entertain so many guests: its name was Kamū-dhénōō<sup>1</sup>. In fact, when Ūrjoonū was to be entertained at the sage's house, this cow in a miraculous manner gave him all kinds of food, clothes, &c. The king on his departure asked for the cow; but the sage refused it to him, though he offered for it his whole kingdom. At length, Ūrjoonū made war on Jūmūdūgneē; and though the cow gave an army to her master, he was unable to cope with Ūrjoonū, who destroyed both him and his army. After the victory, however, Ūrjoonū could not find the cow, but went home disappointed. Pūrūshoo-ramū, hearing of the defeat and death of his father Jūmūdūgneē, went to complain to Shivū, on the mountain Koilasū; but could not get access to him till he had knocked down the gods Gūneshū and Kartikū, Shivū's door-keepers. Shivū gave Pūrūshoo-ramū the instrument pūrūshoo, and promised him the victory. On his return Pūrūshoo-ramū met his mother, who was about to throw herself on the funeral pile of her husband. After attending upon this ceremony, Pūrūshoo-ramū went to the residence of Ūrjoonū, and killed him<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> That is, the cow which yields every thing desired.

<sup>2</sup> This story is told variously in the purāṇas: according to the

These six incarnations are said to have taken place in the sūtyū yoogū<sup>h</sup>. There are no images respecting them made for worship.

The seventh incarnation is that of Ramū to destroy the giant Ravūnū; for the history of which see the Translation of the Table of Contents of the Ramayūnū, toward the close of this volume.—The eight incarnation is that of Būlūramū, to destroy Prūlūmbū and other giants. This latter incarnation is said to have taken place in the dwapūrū-yoogū.—The ninth is the Booddhū incarnation, in which Vishnoo appeared as Booddhū, to destroy the power of the giants. In order to effect this, Booddhū produced among mankind by his preaching, &c. a disposition to universal scepticism; that having no longer any faith in the gods, the giants might cease to apply to them for those powers by which they had become such dreadful scourges to mankind. In this appearance the object of Vishnoo, the preserver, was accomplished by art, without the necessity of war; though the dreadful alternative to which he was driven to accomplish his object, that of plunging mankind into a state of universal scepticism, affords another proof how wretchedly the world would be governed if every thing depended on the wisdom of man.—The tenth incarnation is still expected, under the name of the Kūlkee Ūvūtarū. See translation from the Kūlkee pooranū, in the second volume,

The appearance of Vishnoo, when he took the name of Krishnū to destroy the giant Kūngshū, is called the descent

Ramayūnū, Vishis'thū was the owner of this cow, and Vishwāmitrā the person who fought with the moonee to obtain it.

<sup>h</sup> These ravages of tyranny, and bloody contests, form a sad specimen of the happiness of the Hindoo sūtyū yoogū, could we believe that there ever had been such a period.

of Vishnoo himself, and not an incarnation of this god. There are, however, beside the preceding ten incarnations, and this of Krishnū, many others mentioned in the pooranūs, all having their source in Vishnoo.—The Shrēē-bhagū-vatū contains accounts of the following : Soo-yūgnū created certain gods, and removed distress from the three worlds ;—Kūpilū taught his mother the knowledge of Brūmhū, by which she obtained absorption ;—Dūttatrēyū delivered all his disciples, by means of the ceremony called yogū, from future birth, and obtained for them absorption ;—Koormarū declared the events that had happened in a former age ; that is, previous to the dissolution of things which preceded his incarnation ;—Nūrū-Narayūnū was such a perfect ascetic that the courtezans, sent by the gods to allure him from his religious austerities, were unsuccessful ; Vishnoo himself created a female on purpose to divert him from his devotions, but her attempts were equally abortive ;—Prit'hoo opened the bowels of the earth, and brought forth its treasures ;—Rishūvū was an incomparable yogēē, who was worshipped by the pūrūm-hūngsūs and other ascetics ;—Hūyūgrēēvū was so great a saint, that the words of the védū were uttered every time he breathed ;—Hāree delivered his disciples from all their enemies, whether among men or the inferior animals ;—Hūngsū taught his disciples the mysteries of yogū, and obtained absorption himself while performing the ceremonies of a yogēē ;—Mūnoo's fame filled the three worlds, and ascended even as far as Sūtyū-lokū ;—Dhūnwūntūree delivered all diseased persons from their disorders on their mere remembrance of his name, and gave the water of immortality to the gods ;—Vyasū arranged the védūs, was the author of the pooranūs, &c.—Vibhoo was the spiritual guide of 80,000 disciples, whom he taught the knowledge of Brūmhū, and the ceremonies of yogū ;—Sūtyūsenū cleared the earth of hypocrites and wicked per-

sons;—Voïkoont'hū created the heaven of Vishnoo known by this name, and performed other wonders;—Ūjitū instructed the gods to churn the sea to obtain the water of immortality, and did other things which distinguished him as an incarnation;—Mohūnēē was incarnate, to prevent the giants from obtaining the water of immortality at the churning of the sea;—Narūdū revealed the work called Voishnūvū Tūntrū. The following incarnations are expected: Sarvūbhōumū to dethrone the present Indrū, and instate Būlee in his stead;—Vishwāksénū as the friend of Shūmbhoo, when he becomes the king of heaven;—Dhūr-mū-sétoo to nourish the three worlds;—Soodhama to assist Roodrū-savūrnee, the twelfth of the fourteen mūnoos;—Yogēshwūrū to place Divūs-pūtee on the throne of Indrū;—Vrihuddhānōo to make known many new religious ceremonies.—The reader, however, is not to suppose that there are no other incarnations mentioned in these marvellous books: every hero, and every saint, is complimented by these writers as an incarnate deity.

I have not discovered any proof in the Hindoo writings, or in conversation with learned natives, that these incarnate persons are personifications of any of the divine attributes; or that these stories have any other than a literal meaning. No doubt they were written as fables, which the ignorance of modern Hindoos has converted into facts; or many of them may relate to common events here magnified into miracles.

Stone images of Vishnoo are made for sale, and worshipped in the houses of those who have chosen him for their guardian deity. There are no public festivals in honour of this god, yet he is worshipped at the offering of a burnt sacrifice; in the form of meditation used daily by the



brahm̃s ; at the times when ' the five gods ' are worshipped, and also at the commencement of each shraddh̃. No bloody sacrifices are offered to Vishnoo. The offerings presented to him consist of fruit, flowers, water, clarified butter, sweetmeats, cloth, ornaments, &c.

Many choose Vishnoo for their guardian deity. These persons are called Voishñṽs. The distinctive mark of this sect of Hindoos consists of two lines, rather oval, drawn the whole length of the nose, and carried forward in two straight lines across the forehead. This mark is common to the worshippers of all the different forms of Vishnoo. It is generally made with the clay of the Ganges ; sometimes with powder of sandel wood.

Vishnoo has a thousand names<sup>1</sup>, among which are the following :—Vishnoo ; that is, the being into whom, at the destruction of the world, all is absorbed.—Naraỹñ, or, he who dwelt in the waters<sup>k</sup>, and he who dwells in the minds of the devout.—Voikoont'h̃, or, the destroyer of sorrow.—Visht̃r̃-shr̃va, or, he who, in the form of Virat̃, is all eye, all ear, &c.—Rhish̃k̃sh̃, viz. the god of all the members, and of light.—K̃sh̃ṽ, or, he who gave being to himself, to Br̃mha and Shiṽ ; or, he who has excellent hair.—Madh̃ṽ, or, the husband of L̃ksh̃m̃.—M̃dhoo-s̃dh̃ñ, the destroyer of M̃dhoo, a giant.—Sw̃mbh̃, or, the self-existent.—Doityaree, or, the enemy of the

The meaning of the principal names of some of the gods is to be found in the comment upon the Um̃r̃-kosh̃, by Bh̃r̃t̃-m̃lik̃.

Jupiter had so many names, they could scarcely be numbered ; some of them derived from the places where he lived and was worshipped, and others from the actions he performed.

<sup>1</sup> At the time of a pr̃t̃ỹ, when every thing is reduced to the element of water, Vishnoo sits on the snake Uñt̃, which has 1000 heads.

giants.—Poondūrēekakshū, or, he whose eyes are like the white lotus.—Govindū, or, the raiser of the earth.—Pitam-vūrū, or, he who wears yellow garments.—Ūchyootū, or, the undecayable.—Sharūngēē, or, he who possesses the horn bow.—Vishwūkshénū, or, he whose soldiers fill all quarters of the world.—Jūnarddūnū, or, he who afflicts the wicked, and, he of whom emancipation is sought.—Pūdmū-nabhū, or, he whose navel is like the water lily.—Vishwūm-vūrū, or, the protector of the world.—Koitūbhūjit, or, he who overcame the giant Koitūbhū.

Vishnoo has two wives<sup>1</sup>, Lūkshmēē, the goddess of prosperity, and Sūrūswūtēē, the goddess of learning. The former was produced at the churning of the sea: Sūrūswūtēē is the daughter of Brūmha.

The following description of the heaven of Vishnoo is taken from the Mūhabharūtū. This heaven, called Voikoont'hū<sup>m</sup>, is entirely of gold, and is eighty thousand miles in circumference. All its edifices are composed of jewels. The pillars of this heaven, and all the ornaments of the buildings, are of precious stones. The chrystal waters of the Ganges fall from the higher heavens on the head of

<sup>1</sup> One of the Hindoo poets, in answer to the question, Why has Vishnoo assumed a wooden shape? (alluding to the image of Jūgūnnat'hū,) says, 'The troubles in his family have turned Vishnoo into wood: in the first place, he has two wives, one of whom (the goddess of learning) is constantly talking, and the other (the goddess of prosperity) never remains in one place: to increase his troubles, he sits on a snake; his dwelling is in the water, and he rides on a bird.' All the Hindoos acknowledge that it is a great misfortune for a man to have two wives; especially if both live in one house.

<sup>2</sup> The work called Kūrmū-Vipakū says, that the heavens of Vishnoo, Brūmha, and Shīvē are upon three peaks of the mountain Soomérōp; and that at the bottom of these peaks are the heavens of twenty-one other gods.

**Droovū**, and from thence into the bunches of hair on the heads of seven rishees in this heaven, and from thence they fall and form a river in **Vo'koont'hū**. Here are also fine pools of water, containing blue, red, and white water-lilies, the flowers of some of which contain one hundred petals, and others a thousand; gardens of nymphœas, &c. On a seat as glorious as the meridian sun, sitting on water-lilies, is **Vishnoo**, and on his right hand the goddess **Lūkshmēē**. From the body of **Lūkshmēē** the fragrance of the lotus extends 800 miles. This goddess shines like a continued blaze of lightning. The **dévürshees**, **rajürshees**, and **süptürshees** constantly celebrate the praise of **Vishnoo** and **Lūkshmēē**, and meditate on their divine forms. The **brūmhürshēēs** chant the **védüs**. The glorified **voishnūvüs** approach **Vishnoo**, and constantly serve him. The gods<sup>a</sup> are also frequently employed in celebrating the praises of **Vishnoo**; and **Gūroorū**, the bird-god, is the door-keeper.

## SECT. II.—*Shivū*.

**SHIVU**, the destroyer, has the second place among the Hindoo deities, though in general, in allusion to their offices, these three gods are classed thus: **Brūmha**, **Vishnoo**, **Shivū**.

This god is represented in various ways. In the form of meditation used daily by the **bramhūns** he is described as a silver coloured man, with five faces; an additional eye<sup>o</sup>

<sup>a</sup> These gods are supposed to be visitors at **Vishnoo**'s.

<sup>o</sup> One of the names of **Shivū** is **Trilōchūnū**, viz. the three-eyed. One of the names of **Jupiter** was **Trioculus**, (**Triophthalmos**), given him by the Greeks, because he had three eyes. An image of this kind was set up in **Troy**, which, beside the usual two eyes, had a third in the forehead.

and a half-moon grace each forehead<sup>p</sup>. He has four arms; in one hand he holds a pūrūshoo; in the second a deer; with the third he is bestowing a blessing, and with the fourth he forbids fear: he sits on a lotus<sup>q</sup>, and wears a tyger-skin garment.

At other times Shivū is represented with one head, three eyes, and two arms, riding on a bull, covered with ashes, naked, his eyes inflamed with intoxicating herbs<sup>r</sup>, having in one hand a horn, and in the other a drum.

Another image of Shivū is the lingū, a smooth black stone almost in the form of a sugar-loaf, with a projection at the base like the mouth of a spoon.

There are several stories in the pooranūs respecting the origin of the lingū worship, three of which I had translated, and actually inserted in this work, leaving out as much as possible of their offensive parts: but in correcting the proofs, they appeared too gross, even when refined as much as possible, to meet the public eye. It is true I have omitted them with some reluctance, because I wish that the

<sup>p</sup> At the churning of the sea, Shivū obtained the moon for his share, and fixed it, with all its glory, in his forehead.

<sup>q</sup> It appears that this plant was formerly venerated by the Egyptians as much as it is now by the Hindoos. The sacred images of the Tartars, Japanese, and other nations are also frequently represented as placed upon it.

<sup>r</sup> Bacchus, who appears to bear a pretty strong resemblance to Shivū, is said to have wandered about naked, or to have had no other covering than a tyger's skin, which is the common garment of Shivū, and of his followers, the sūnyasēes. The bloated image of Shivū corresponds with that of Bacchus; and though the Indian god did not intoxicate himself with wine, yet his image is evidently that of a drunkard. Shivū perpetually smoked intoxicating herbs,

apologists for idolatry should be left without excuse, and that the sincere Christian should know what those who wish to rob him of the Christian Religion mean to leave in its stead.

From these abominable stories, temples innumerable have arisen in India, and a Shivū lingū placed in each of them, and WORSHIPPED AS A GOD!! These temples, indeed, in Bengal and many parts of Hindoost'han, are far more numerous than those dedicated to any other idol; and the number of the daily worshippers of this scandalous image, (even among the Hindoo women,) who make the image with the clay of the Ganges every morning and evening, is beyond comparison far greater than the worshippers of all the other gods put together.

The account of the origin of the phalli of the Greeks bears a strong and unaccountable resemblance to some parts of the pouranic accounts of the lingū; Bacchus was angry with the Athenians, because they despised his solemnities, when they were first brought by Pegasus out of Bœotia into Attica; for which he afflicted them with a grievous disease, that could have no cure, till, by the advice of the oracles, they paid due reverence to the god, and erected phalli to his honour; whence the feasts and sacrifices called Phallica were yearly celebrated among the Athenians.—The story of Priapus is too indecent, and too well known to need recital. Should the reader wish for farther information on this subject, he is referred to an extract from Diodorus Siculus, as given in the Reverend Mr. Maurice's second volume of *Indian Antiquities*. The perusal of this extract may help further to convince the reader that the old-idolatry, and that of the present race of Hindoos, at least in their abominable nature, and in some of their prominent features, are ONE,

Beside the clay image of the lingü, there are two kinds of black stone lingüs. These are set up in the Hindoo temples<sup>1</sup>. The first is called swüyümbōō, (the self-existent,) or ūnadee<sup>2</sup>, that which has no beginning. The second they call vanü-lingü, because Vanü, a king, first instituted the worship of this image. These stones are brought from the neighbourhood of the river Gündhükēē, which falls into the Ganges near Patna. The images are made by Hindoo and Mūsulman stone-cutters.

There is another form in which Shivü is worshipped, called Mūha-kalü. This is the image of a smoke-coloured boy with three eyes, clothed in red garments. His hair stands erect; his teeth are very large; he wears a necklace of human skulls, and a large turban of his own hair; in one hand he holds a stick, and in the other the foot of a bedstead; he has a large belly, and makes a very terrific appearance. Shivü is called Mūha-kalü, because he destroys all; by which the Hindoos mean, that all is absorbed in him at last, in order to be reproduced<sup>3</sup>.

Images of this form of Shivü are not made in Bengal; but a pan of water, or an ūnadee-lingü, is substituted, before which bloody sacrifices are offered, and other cere-

<sup>1</sup> It is remarkable, that a stone image, consecrated to Venus, bore a strong resemblance to the lingü. Of this stone it is said, that it was "from the top to the bottom of an orbicular figure, a little broad beneath; the circumference was small, and sharpening towards the top like a sugar loaf. The reason unknown."

<sup>2</sup> At the time of a great drought, the Hindoos, after performing its worship, throw very large quantities of water upon this ūnadee-lingü, in order to induce Shivü to give them rain.

<sup>3</sup> Some say Saturn received his name, because he was satisfied with the years he devoured. Saturn was also represented as devouring his children, and vomiting them up again.

monies performed, in the month Choitrū, at the new moon. Only a few persons perform this worship. Except before this image, bloody sacrifices are never offered to Shivū, who is himself called a voishnūvū, i. e. a worshipper of Vishnū, before whose image no animals are slain, and whose disciples profess never to eat animal food.

Under different names other images of Shivū are described in the shastrūs; but none of these images are made at present, nor is any public worship offered to them.

Those who receive the name of Shivū from their spiritual guides, are called Soivyūs. The mark on the forehead which these persons wear, is composed of three curved lines like a half-moon, to which is added a round dot on the nose. It is made either with the clay of the Ganges, or with sandal wool, or the ashes of cow-dung.

Worship is performed daily at the temples of the lingū; when offerings of various kinds are presented to this image. If the temple belong to a shōōdrū, a bramhūn is employed, who receives a small annual gratuity, and the daily offerings\*. These ceremonies occupy a few minutes, or half an hour, at the pleasure of the worshipper. Many persons living in Bengal employ bramhūns at Benares to perform the worship of the lingū in temples which they have built there,

Every year, in the month Phalagoonū, the Hindoos make the image of Shivū, and worship it for one day, throwing

\* The shastrūs prohibit the bramhūns from receiving the offerings presented to Shivū: the reason I have not discovered. The bramhūns, however, contrive to explain the words of the shastrū in such a manner, as to secure the greater part of the things presented to this idol.



the image the next day into the water. This worship is performed in the night, and is accompanied with singing, dancing, music, feasting, &c. The image worshipped is either that of Shivũ with five faces, or that with one face. In the month Maghũ also a festival in honour of Shivũ is held for one day, when the image of this god sitting on a bull, with Parvūtē on his knee, is worshipped. This form of Shivũ is called Hũrũ-Gourēv.

In the month Choitrũ an abominable festival in honour of this god is celebrated; when many Hindoos, assuming the name of sũnyasēũs, inflict on themselves the greatest cruelties. Some of the chief sũnyasēũs purify themselves for a month previously to these ceremonies, by going to some celebrated temple or image of Shivũ, and there eating only once a day, abstaining from certain gratifications, repeating the name of Shivũ, dancing before his image, &c. Other sũnyasēũs perform these preparatory ceremonies for fifteen, and others for only ten days; during which time parties of men and boys dance in the streets, having their bodies covered with ashes, &c. and a long piece of false hair mixed with mud wrapped round the head like a turban. A large drum accompanies each party, making a horrid din.

On the first day of the festival, these sũnyasēũs cast themselves from a bamboo stage with three resting places, the highest about twenty feet from the ground. From this height these persons cast themselves on iron spikes stuck in bags of straw. These spikes are laid in a reclining posture, and when the person falls they almost constantly fall down instead of entering his body. There are instances

Hũrũ is the name of Shivũ, and Gourē that of Doorga.

sounds of their filthy songs. As we entered the village where the temple of this great goddess is situated, the crowds were so great that we could with difficulty get our vehicles along, and at last were completely blocked up. We then alighted, and went amongst the crowd. But who can describe a scene like this?—Here, men of all ages, who intended to have their tongues pierced, or their sides bored, were buying garlands of flowers to hang round their necks, or tie round their heads;—there, others were carrying their offerings to the goddess:—above the heads of the crowd were seen nothing but the feathers belonging to the great drums, and the instruments of torture which each victim was carrying in his hand. These wretched slaves of superstition were distinguished from others by the quantity of oil rubbed on their bodies, and by streaks and dots of mud all over them: some of the chief men belonging to each company were covered with ashes, or dressed in a most fantastic manner, like the fool among mountebanks. For the sake of low sport, some were dressed as English women; and others had on a hat, to excite the crowd to laugh at Europeans. As soon as we could force our way, we proceeded to the temple of Kalēc, where the crowd, inflamed to madness, almost trampled upon one another, to obtain a sight of the idol. We went up to the door-way, when a bramhūn, who was one of the owners of the idol, addressed one of my companions in broken English: “Money—money—for black mother.” My friend, not much liking the looks of his black mother, declared he should give her nothing. From this spot we went into the temple-yard, where two or three blacksmiths had begun the work of piercing the tongues and boring the sides of these infatuated disciples of Shivū. The first man seemed reluctant to hold out his tongue; but the blacksmith, rubbing it with something like flour, and having a piece of cloth betwixt his fingers, laid firm hold,

dragged it out, and, placing his lancet under it in the middle, pierced it through, and let the fellow go. The next person, whose tongue we saw cut, directed the blacksmith to cut it on a contrary side, as it had been already cut twice. This man seemed to go through the business of having his tongue slit with perfect *sang froid*. The company of natives were entirely unmoved, and the blacksmith, pocketing the trifling fee given by each for whom he did this favour, laughed at the sport. I could not help asking, whether they were not punishing these men for lying.—After seeing the operation performed on one or two more, we went to another group, where they were boring the sides. The first we saw undergoing this operation was a boy, who might be twelve or thirteen years old, and who had been brought thither by his elder brother to submit to this cruelty. A thread rubbed with clarified butter was drawn through the skin on each side, with a kind of lancet having an eye like a needle. He did not flinch, but hung by his hands over the shoulders of his brother. I asked a man who had just had his sides bored, why he did this? He said, he had made a vow to Kalēē at a time of dangerous illness, and was now performing this vow: a bye-stander added, it was an act of holiness, or merit. Passing from this group, we saw a man dancing backwards and forwards with two canes run through his sides as thick as a man's little finger. In returning to Calcutta we saw many with things of different thicknesses thrust through their sides and tongues, and several with the pointed handles of iron shovels, containing fire, sticking in their sides. Into this fire every now and then they threw Indian pitch, which for the moment blazed very high. I saw one man whose singular mode of self-torture struck me much: his breast, arms, and other parts of his body, were entirely covered with pins, as thick as nails or packing nee-

dles. This is called *vanū-phōra* \*. The person had made a vow to Shivū thus to pierce his body, praying the god to remove some evil from him.

Some *sūnyasēēs* at this festival put swords through the holes in their tongues; others spears; others thick pieces of round iron, which they call arrows. Many, as a bravado, put other things through their tongues, as living snakes, bamboos, ramrods, &c. Others, to excite the attention of the crowd still more, procure images of houses, gods, temples, &c. and placing them on a single bamboo, hold them up in their hands, and put the bamboo through their tongues. In 1805, at Calcutta, a few base fellows made a bamboo stage, placed a prostitute upon it, and carried her through the streets, her paramour accompanying them, having one of her ancle ornaments in the slit of his tongue. Another year a man put his finger through the tongue of another person, and they went along dancing and making indecent gestures together. Others put bamboos, ropes, canes, the stalk of a climbing plant, the long tube of the hooka, &c. through their sides, and rubbing these things with oil, while two persons go before and two behind to hold the ends of the things which have been passed through the sides, they dance backwards and forwards, making indecent gestures. These people pass through the streets with these marks of self-torture upon them, followed by crowds of idle people. They are paid by the towns or villages where these acts are performed, and a levy is made on the inhabitants to defray the expense. On the evening of this day some *sūnyasēēs* pierce the skin of their foreheads, and place a rod of iron in it as a socket, and on this rod fasten a lamp, which is kept burning all night. The persons bearing these lamps sit all night in or near Shivū's temple,

\* Piercing with arrows.